THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) National Health Policy is under revision. All important issues including the role of private sector will be appropriately addressed in the New National Health Policy. Government is however, committed to the overall objective of providing health care services for all including the vulnerable section with a focus on providing comprehensive primary health care.

(c) and (d) The new National Health Policy envisages enactment of a comprehensive legislative to regualate the private sector in terms of quality standards, conduct of clinical practice and delivery of medical services.

News-item "Diabetes could cause blindness"

803. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM. Will the MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to newsitem captioned, "Diabetes could cause blindness" which appeared in the Indian Express, dated 23rd November, 2000;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in this direction;

(c) whether it is a fact that retinal diseases may lead to blindness; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to detect the cases of retinopathy in the initial stages itself?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A short-term training programme has been initiated for eye surgeons to train them in diagnosis and management of retinal diseases including diabetic retinopathy.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) To detect and treat retinopathy of pre-maturity in the new born, 10 workshops were organized where paediatricians and eye surgeons were trained in early diagnosis and treatment of the cases. To detect retinopathy in the aged, screening of patients

attending eye department is being encouraged with specific reference to posterior segment examination of the patients.

PHCs in Assam

804. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal for setting up primary health centres in rural and hilly areas of Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof, location-wise; and

(c) the total fund allocated for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) The setting up of Primary Health Centres comes under the purview of the State Government. The State Government decides the location as per their requirement. Keeping in view the shortfall of Primary Health Centres as per population norms vide 1991 population, the State had been advised to establish 107 Primary Health Centres during 9th Plan period, out of which 27 Primary Health Centres are to be set up during 2001-2002.

(c) Primary Health Centres are established and maintained and of funds provided to the State under Minimum Needs Programme&Basic Minimum Services Programmes. In addition Additional Central Assistance under Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana is being provided for strengthening Primary Health. Out of Rs. 20112.00 lakhs earmarked for PMGY to Assam for the year 2001-2002, a minimum of 10% would be allocated to Primary Health.

Right of breast-feeding

† 805. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain multinational companies are trying to snatch away the right of breast feedings;

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.